



La Voz

Newsletter of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic
Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

May 2005

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President's Message

*By Bertha Venegas
NOPHNRCSE President*

Greetings! Everything is in place for our upcoming National Training Conference in Lafayette, Louisiana, June 27-30, 2005. Mario Morales and all the planning teams are doing an outstanding job by offering us a conference filled with quality speakers and training sessions to meet all of our needs. The latest conference information can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic>. Early registration deadline is May 23rd. I encourage everyone to plan on attending the conference.

Every year the President recommends to the Council individuals to serve as Chairs of committees as outlined in our constitution and by-laws. I am currently accepting nominations (you can nominate yourself) to Chair a committee. Check our website for a list of the committees. Those interested can email me at bvenegas@ev1.net.

We had a very successful election thanks to Luis Gamboa and members of the nominations committee.



*Bertha Venegas,
NOPHNRCSE President*

Congratulations to our new Council members: Kristin Graham Chavez, Vice President; Rachel Lopez, Regional Representative for the West; Jazelle Jusino, Regional Representative for the Southeast; Mike Castillo, serving another term as Regional Representative for the South Central; and Zaragoza Rodriguez, returning as Treasurer. I look forward to working with all of you in the next year.

As we continue to strive for excellence in our professions let us not forget to spend time with our loved ones.

Look forward to seeing everyone next month!

Bertha T. Venegas

The National
Council, 2004-2005

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NOPHNRCSE Training Conference Information

Latest
Conference
Information
Can Be Found
on Pages 2
and 3.

Hotel Information

If you have not yet reserved your hotel room, please take a moment and call the Lafayette Hilton at 337-235-6111. The room rate for two double beds is \$60 per night and the room rate for a king size bed is \$70 per night.

The Lafayette Hilton is located at 1521 West Pinhook Road, Lafayette, LA 70505. The hotel overlooks the scenic Vermilion River. The Conference Planning Team looks forward to seeing you in Lafayette.

Registration Information

The Registration Committee is continuing to accept Conference Registrations, but encourages you to register as early as possible. Additionally, if you have any special requests or needs, please note them on your registration form.

For more information about registration, please contact Stella Santos at 830-278-2014 x3 or visit the organization's web page at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/>.

We also want to encourage everyone to register for their professional development sessions. This registration form can also be found on our web site. Forward this completed registration form to Flavio Garza at 956-723-3508 (fax).

Before and After the Conference

*By Mario A. Morales,
Conference Planning
Chairperson*

If you want to see and experience the many wonders of Louisiana, plan on staying after the conference or arrive a little early. The Lafayette Hilton Towers has agreed to honor the conference room rate for three days prior and three days after our conference. Note: If you have any problems securing the room at the "conference rate," please give Dee Dee Schexnayder a call. She is our contact person and will make the necessary arrangements. [Note: please mention "NOPHNRCSE Conference" when reserving your room.] The hotel number is 337-235-6111.

This year's conference schedule allows for some local site-seeing but does not allow time to stray too far away from Lafayette. For instance, New Orleans and Bourbon Street are at least two hours away. It would be difficult to experience the night life of Bourbon Street and fully participate in the activities scheduled for our conference. Keep in mind we are attending this conference for a purpose. For more information about the Lafayette area, visit www.LafayetteTravel.com.

Constitution and By-laws Training Session

*By Patrick Conner,
Constitution and By-Laws
Committee Chair*

The Constitution and By-Laws Committee will conduct a professional development training session on June 30. We will explain the process of amending the constitution and by-laws.

Please bring your ideas, suggestions, and recommended solutions. Your recommendations will form proposed amendments to the constitution and by-laws.

The current NOPHNRCSE constitution and by-laws is posted on our website. Please download and read these documents before attending this session.

Conference Tours

There have been some adjustments to our conservation tour schedule. The St. Landry Parish Farm that we were scheduled to visit sold a couple of weeks ago and the new owner stated that he was not ready for any visitors. We repackaged Tour #3 and #4 and feel that we have very interesting tours scheduled in their place. We have also added a stop to the first tour, at the Pepper Farm, that the owners felt would be extremely inter-

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(Conservation Tours continued from page 2)

Conservation Tour Details

esting. Please review the following descriptions and associated information, and if you wish to change your designation please contact Flavio Garza at 956-723-6643.

Tour #1 - Avery Island Pepper Farm Tour

Site #1

The Jungle Gardens and Bird City of Avery Island (extra \$5.75 per person)

This tour is comprised of an exotic garden created by Mr. Ned McIlhenney son of Edmund McIlhenney founder of the world-renowned Tabasco sauce, on a 200-acre section of Avery Island. Roads meander through the Jungle Gardens so you can enjoy from the comfort of the bus. Footpaths are available to you can get a better view of the shallow water plants such as Louisiana Irises, and a close up look at flowering shrubs such as hydrangeas, azaleas and camellias.

You can inspect a glass temple that shelters an 800-year-old statue of Buddha. White-tail deer, nutria, raccoons, black bears, alligators and thousands of herons are among the wildlife you may see in the Jungles Gardens.

Also on this tour, you will view the Bird City where thousands of snowy egrets can be seen each year on specially-built, pier-like structures in a pond. You can stroll the

gardens along a path covered by gnarled oaks laced with Spanish moss.

Site #2

**TABASCO® Pepper Sauce
Factory**

Get ready for the hot stuff! You will see the factory where Tabasco brand Pepper Sauce is made. There is a short film on the history and a guided tour of the bottling and packaging operations. Then spend time in the original Tabasco Country Store and check out a wide array of products and souvenirs for sale. Free recipes, samples, and tasting.

Tour #2 (Limit 50) Marsh Tour @ Avery Island

Stop #1

**TABASCO® Pepper Sauce
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The Marsh tour will consist of loading the boats at the Avery Island boat landing.

Stop 2 - Vegetative

plantings along the channel traveling from island to Vermilion bay.

Stop 3 - Avery canal structure at the mouth of Avery canal @ Vermilion Bay Structure built by the state in coordination with Oaks/ Avery CWPPRA project.

Stop 4 - Vegetative planting in Tigre Lagoon (will depend on water depth on that day and ability of boats to access the channel).

Stop 5 - Oaks Canal structure in Vermilion Parish.

Stop 6 - Discussion of marsh management practices such as plantings, structures, and prescribed burning.

This is a good marsh tour that can be changed by skipping stops or stopping along the way if the group wants to. Running time to make the trip is about 1 - 1.5 hours depending on the boats and we can stop at each location about 10-15 minutes to talk. Boat rides could be rough.

Visit the following website for more information: http://www.tabasco.com/tabasco_history/visit_avery_island.cfm

Tour #3 Lake Martin Ecosystem Swamp Tour (Limit 50)

Site #1: Swamp Tour (extra \$10.00 per person on swamp boat tour).

This swamp tour is

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(Conservation Tours continued from page 3)

Don't forget to register for the professional development sessions and conservation tours.

conducted by Bryan Champagne, a French-speaking Cajun. He'll show you how people, the Cajuns like himself, made a living in the swamp years ago, and some still today, by crawfishing, fur trapping, fishing hoop nets for catfish and bait fish, running trout lines, etc.

You will travel through very dense water vegetation that is native and non-native to southern Louisiana. You will also travel into the dense interior of the swamp and go where no other type of boat can go.

The tour will depart from the Lake Martin Landing, where you will then drive into a flooded forest of Cypress and Tupelo trees draped with Spanish moss. The flooded forest is home to 197 different species of birds, which we could see, such as Barbed Owls, Great horned Owls, Pileated Wood Peckers, Anhinga, Cormorants, Wood Ducks, Yellow (and Black) crowned Night Herons, The Great Blue Heron as well as nutria, frogs, snakes, and most of all, alligators.

Along the way, you could see alligator 3 to 16 feet long. Bryan will also show you how the Cajuns harvest alligator eggs and alligators out of the swamps, bayous and marsh lands.

For more information, visit the following website: <http://www.champagnes>

swamptours.com/

Site #2 Tour Lasuca Sugarcane Mill (Levert St. John)

The operation of a Sugarcane Mill Coop.

Site #3: University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Model Sustainable Agricultural Complex. We will tour sites on intensive grazing BMPs on beef cattle and BMPs on crawfish production.

1. Grazing Management- a) rotational grazing, b) MIG, c) fertilization/liming, and d) soil sampling with a demonstration site along the Conservancy road learning center.

2. Erosion control- a) pipe drops and diversion levees, b) grass waterways, c) No-till planting with a demonstration site along the conservancy road near the pipe drop and weather station.

3. Sugarcane production- a) VFS, b) harvesting practices, and c) residue management with a visit to the filter strip at the rear entrance to the crawfish ponds.

4. Crawfish production a) water management, b) planting, and c) harvesting with a talk of the UL System with Dr. Jay Huner or Dr. Will Bernard.

Tour #4 University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Model Sustainable Agricultural Complex. (Limit 50)

Site Visits

Site #1: We will tour sites on intensive grazing BMPs on beef cattle and BMPs on crawfish production.

1. Grazing Management- a) rotational grazing, b) MIG, c) fertilization/liming, and d) soil sampling with a demonstration site along the Conservancy road learning center.

2. Erosion control- a) pipe drops and diversion levees, b) grass waterways, c) No-till planting with a demonstration site along the conservancy road near the pipe drop and weather station.

3. Sugarcane production- a) VFS, b) harvesting practices, and c) residue management with a visit to the filter strip at the rear entrance to the crawfish ponds.

4. Crawfish production- a) water management, b) planting, and c) harvesting with a talk of the UL System with Dr. Jay Huner or Dr. Will Bernard.

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2005 NOPHNRCE Scholarship Recipients Selected

*(Conservation Tours
continued from page 4)*

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Visit the following website for more information: <http://www.champagnesswamtours.com/>

2005 NOPHNRCE Scholarship Winners

by Adolfo Diaz, Scholarship Committee Chair

NOPHNRCE, I am proud to say, has been an organization that perfectly understands the value of a scholarship. The organization has made scholarship awards to worthy recipients for seven years now. Since its creation, the scholarship program has seen several changes. These include the creation of a new scholarship, The Martha Guerra-Arteaga Scholarship, increasing the amount of the scholarships, and recently, increasing the number of scholarships awarded.

This year, I am fortunate in being assisted by a diligent committee. The committee consists of nine individuals, including myself. I am proud and honored that Manuel Rosales, Omar Vega, Olga Vargas, Amanda Hasemeier, Gregorio Cruz, Ismael Matos, Flavio Garza and Sharyn Alvarez have ably contributed to accomplishing the work of the Scholarship Committee this year. The results of the committee's efforts are the following scholarship winners:

Stephanie DeLaRosa, 17, Goodyear, AZ
Danielle Catherine Dodier, 18, Laredo, TX
Joaquin D. Anaya, 18, Taos, NM
Alexandra Maria Avila, 18, Derwood, MD (Martha Guerra-Arteaga Scholarship)
Ninfa Romero, 42, Chico, CA

We commend these nominees for their energetic pursuit of higher education. Interestingly, we had more applicants and of greater quality than ever. Each nominee will be awarded \$1,000 and will be given the opportunity to attend this year's annual training conference.

While the "official" work of the committee is complete for the year, the unofficial work is just about to get underway, and we need your help with it! With the growth of the organization, the growth of number of scholarship applicants, and the ever-increasing cost of education, we need to boost the financial foundation of the scholarship program.

To that end, the Scholarship and Endowment Fund Committee and the National Council are asking for your generous item donations to be auctioned at the scholarship night. Remember that all donated items are tax deductible and all proceeds go to the scholarship endowment fund, which is on the brink of reaching \$50,000.

Let's have fun with this event and let's be creative as we can with what we bring.



Project Seeks Minority Professionals in Environmental Field

A new project by the Minority Environmental Leadership Development Initiative (MELDI) may interest NOPHNRCSE members.

The project, being led by Dr. Dorceta Taylor at the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) at the University of Michigan, would like to feature profiles of minority professionals who are involved in environmental work. Though minorities have had stellar professional careers in the environmental field, it is very difficult to find out about such individuals or their accomplishments.

One of the goals of MELDI is to identify such individuals, develop profiles of them and post it to a website. This will serve both as a celebration of their achievements and as a means of recognizing the impact minorities have had and could have on the environmental field.

Once identified, minorities will be interviewed by phone. The interview is, at most, 20 minutes long. The profiles will be featured on the web at <http://www.umich.edu/~meldi>. The interview consists of questions about their educational background, employment background and how/why they came to work in the environmental field.

If interested in being interviewed, contact the person below:

Latonia Payne, Program Coordinator, Minority Environmental Leadership Development Initiative (MELDI)

School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan
430 East University

Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1115

Phone: 1(734) 615-2602 Fax: 1(734) 936-2195

Email: paynel@umich.edu

University projects seek to celebrate minority contributions.

U.S. Latinos and Latinas and World War II

A project being organized by the University of Texas at Austin Department of Journalism is seeking to capture the untold stories of Latinos and Latinas and World War II. Detailed information and narratives can be found at the following website: <http://www.utexas.edu/projects/latinoarchives/index.html>

Project Background: World War II was a major turning point for U.S. Latinos, changing the worldviews of an entire generation. Many Latino soldiers returned home to find the same discrimination they had left behind;

they began questioning a system that held Latinos to a lower status. Many veterans used the G.I. Bill to earn a college education. Latinas who worked in military installations and in other jobs previously denied them also questioned the status quo. Some Mexican citizens were brought in to fill jobs left vacant by departing soldiers. Few lives were left untouched—even those men who were unable to join the fighting forces would never be the same.

In the following years, these men and women made astounding

civil rights advancements for their people—in school desegregation, in voting rights, in basic civil rights. Powerful organizations grew out of this era, including the G.I. Forum and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Sadly, the stories of these men and women have been virtually untold, either in the mass media or in scholarly writing. The main problem has been the small numbers of U.S. Latino journalists, scholars and other writers who would document the stories of this generation.